



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

October 24, 2017

Terence R. McAuliffe  
Governor

The Honorable Morgan Griffith  
2202 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Griffith:

On behalf of the people of Virginia, I urge you to act immediately to reauthorize funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Every day that Congress allows partisan infighting and dysfunction to block the reauthorization of this program, 66,000 children and 1,100 pregnant women in Virginia get closer to losing insurance that is essential to a healthy and productive life.

As a result of Congress' failure to reauthorize funding for CHIP, Virginia will soon exhaust its funding for the program. The Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) has already begun preparing for the complex, costly process of rolling back FAMIS (Family Access to Medical Insurance Security), Virginia's CHIP program.

**Unless something changes, DMAS will be forced to send letters on December 1, 2017 notifying families of the impending loss of coverage. Enrollment will be frozen January 1, 2018. And by January 31, Virginia will have insufficient federal funds to continue the program. The state will have no choice but to terminate coverage at the end of January.**

Continued failure to reauthorize funding for CHIP will pose a crisis in every corner of the Commonwealth. In fact, 5,589 children and pregnant women who live in District 9 are slated to receive letters notifying them that their health coverage will terminate at the end of January.

The loss of coverage will have devastating impacts on the health and economic security of the families we serve. In the last two fiscal years, FAMIS has paid for 218,190 immunizations and 221,309 well-child checkups to get children off to a healthy start in life. Thanks to FAMIS, 1,118 children received treatment for cancer; 258 children underwent heart surgeries; 31 children living with HIV and 32 children born with neonatal abstinence syndrome accessed needed treatment.

CHIP is a cost-effective, efficient program with a positive impact that extends beyond health to encompass increased financial stability for families and educational gains for children. In Virginia, we are proud of our success in enrolling 40,000 additional children in FAMIS and Medicaid since September 2014 contributing to a state record 95 percent of all children insured. We should be building on our success rather than contemplating the end of this landmark program.

In addition to the human toll, failure to fund CHIP would have serious budget implications for Virginia. Because federal law restricts how states can scale back coverage, federally mandated coverage will continue, with the Commonwealth required to take on a much larger share of the cost. In addition to the 66,000 children who would lose coverage entirely, approximately 59,000 Virginia children will be switched to Medicaid if CHIP is not funded, at a cost of tens of millions of dollars annually to the state's General Fund. Identifying resources to cover these costs will likely require cuts to other important functions of state government.

Please do not continue to ignore this crisis. States cannot wait until the last federal dollar is gone before initiating shut-down activities and informing families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Terence R. McAuliffe", written in a cursive style.

Terence R. McAuliffe